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By Robert J. Lopez
February 10, 2014 | 10:11 p.m.

A section of the new eastern span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge sprung hundreds of leaks after a winter storm soaked Northern California, state transportation officials said Monday.

The leaks were in a supposedly watertight steel chamber that supports the new road bed of the span, California Department of Transportation officials said in an article published in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#).


The water was leaking into the steel structure beneath a 0.3-mile section where the bridge deck is suspended from its tower.

"We're taking this issue very seriously -- it is something that, if left unaddressed over several years, could become an issue," said Richard Land, Caltrans' chief deputy director.

Metro staff

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The report said Caltrans officials consider the leaks manageable. But officials said they had not come up with a solution because they had not figured out all the reasons the leaks were occurring.

The Chronicle reported that caulking may be failing to keep out water in an area where guardrails meet the steel support structure beneath the roadway. But Caltrans officials downplayed that possibility, according to the report.

The new \$6.4-billion span, which opened Labor Day, came in \$5 billion over budget and years later than planned.

Last month, two engineers told a state Senate committee that their [safety concerns were suppressed](#) by Caltrans higher-ups. But the engineers said they believed that the eastern span of the structure is safe.

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